

# White Pine

## Recreation Specialist Report



Prepared by:  
Shawn Dieterich  
Recreation Management Specialist

for:  
Palouse Ranger District  
Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests

June 7, 2019

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Overview of Issues Addressed .....	2
Affected Environment .....	2
Existing Condition.....	2
Environmental Consequences .....	6
Methodology .....	6
Alternative 1 – No Action.....	8
Alternative 2 – Proposed Action .....	9
<b><i>Proposed Action</i></b> .....	9

### List of Tables

<b>Table 1 – Impacted trails in project area .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Table 2 – Impact to OHV recreation due to vegetation management activity .....</b>	<b>11</b>

## Introduction

Recreation analysis for the White Pine project will focus on the effects of the proposed project activities and the impact on the recreation opportunities encompassed within the White Pine project area and areas adjacent to it. The report will describe the existing recreation culture of the area, will list the desired condition of the area from the Clearwater National Forest Plan, determine which roads, trails and recreation areas may be affected by the project, and describe what impact the proposed activities would have on the recreation opportunities of the area.

This project will analyze all proposed activities, but will focus on the various vegetative harvesting activities, as they generally represent the greatest impact for recreation opportunities both in the short and long term.

Recreation activity is not directly related to the purpose and need of this project, but this area is heavily used by forest visitors and the project will impact their recreation experiences. Changes to the landscape of this area would have an effect on the visitor's enjoyment of the area in the short and long term.

### *Overview of Issues Addressed*

The effect on Off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation, camping, non-motorized recreation and other recreation are the indicators used in the analysis.

### Issue Indicators

Effects to the recreation resource are discussed in general terms; however, the indicator used to measure effects are listed below.

- ***Off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation:*** Total number of road/trail miles decommissioned, stored or constructed.
- ***Camping:*** Opportunity change for the Forest visitors.
- ***Non-motorized recreation:*** Total number of road/trail miles decommissioned, stored or constructed.
- ***Winter recreation:*** Likelihood of winter logging/haul and total acres of vegetation management activity.
- ***Other recreation:*** Total acres of vegetation management activity, total number of road/ trail miles decommissioned, stored and constructed.

## Affected Environment

### *Existing Condition*

The White Pine Project area is located between Mannering Creek and White Pine Creek. State Highway 6, also known as the White Pine Scenic Drive, forms the eastern boundary of the project area. The Giant White Pine Campground, accessed by State Highway 6, is found adjacent to the southern portion of the project area. Several popular trails are found within and adjacent to the project area. The Old Sampson Trail 221 parallels Highway 6 along the ridgeline to the west of the roadway. The East Dennis Trail 223 follows the next large ridgeline between Blake's Fork and White Pine Creek.

The White Pine Project area and area adjacent to it receives moderate recreation use and pressure on the Palouse Ranger District. This is due to a number of factors including the natural features and scenery of the area; proximity to the communities of Moscow, ID and Pullman, WA, which provides visitors with amenities such as gas, groceries, food and lodging facilities; numerous camping opportunities for both developed and dispersed sites in the area; and access to hundreds of miles of road and trail systems on both National Forest lands and adjacent lands under other land management (mainly Potlatch Corporation).

Nearby population centers, plus relatively easy, paved access via State Highways and County Roads ensures that large numbers of visitors flock to this area for recreational pursuits. State Highway 6 provides access to the area from the south – Lewiston and Moscow ID, Clarkston and Pullman, WA, plus easy access to larger population centers in the north approximately 1 hour away (Spokane, WA – Coeur d' Alene, ID metropolitan area). This proximity to population centers results in users spending time in the area for both day and overnight excursions.

Recreation use occurs throughout the year; however, summertime receives significant use, especially around holiday weekends. During these weekends, virtually all camp spots (both developed and dispersed) are occupied, traffic along existing roads is very busy and trails are at their busiest. With the increased recreation pressure placed on this relatively small amount of Forest Service land, resource impacts are occurring in and around riparian areas and off existing National Forest System roads and trails creating resource management challenges.

The trail system within the project area consists of trails that are either in coincident use with an open road, have been created on an existing road template currently closed to full-sized vehicles, or exist as a “true” trail template with specifications such as width that would only be navigable by trail vehicles.

Road 377 along the northern boundary of the project area hosts a number of non-motorized cross-country ski trails and receive high levels of use during the winter months.

- 1. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation:** Trail construction in the area began in the late 1920's, primarily to facilitate access for fire lookouts/control. Road work in this portion of the district began in the early 1930's. Old Sampson Trail 221 was named after Charles Sampson, owner of a music company in Boise, ID, near the turn of the century. Sampson marked and maintained a network of roads and trails throughout Idaho between 1924 and 1930 as an advertising medium and as a method of attracting commerce to Boise. At one time, Sampson advertised that his company marked and maintained 6,600 miles of roads and trails in Idaho. Including the segment of trail within the project area. By 1933 the Sampson trail extended from the Canadian boarder to southern Idaho and is significant since it represents the first attempt to sign and maintain a transportation system in Idaho on a large scale basis. The trail was officially designated as the Sampson trail by the governor and recognized by an act of the legislature in 1933.

Trail development continued periodically throughout the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but picked up considerably in the late 1990's and early 2000's, particularly with completion of the Upper Palouse OHV Decision in 2005. This decision approved construction of a series of motorized trails that were developed and linked with existing road beds to provide a variety of trails and loop opportunities for users.

OHV use is an extremely popular recreational activity throughout the Palouse Ranger District. It continues to be an extremely fast growing segment of recreation activity occurring on National Forest System (NFS) lands. There is one OHV trail and two motorcycle trails located within the project area. Motorized trails in this area are considered part of the Upper Palouse ATV system and well-known throughout the region. Trails that are particularly popular with visitors include:

- a. Old Smapson Trail 221 (OHV)
- b. Old Sampson Connector Trail 221-A, (Motorcycle)
- c. East Dennis Trail 223 (Motorcycle)

The table below provides detailed information on all of the trails located within the project area. It is important to note that the total trail miles located *within or connected to* the project area is roughly 5% of the total district trail mileage of approximately 205 miles. The trail mileage within the project area is approximately 10 miles.

**Table 1 – Impacted trails in project area**

Trail #	Type of trail	Total miles	Miles within project area	Existing Condition <sup>1</sup>	Travel Plan code <sup>2</sup>	Restrictions (from Travel Plan code)		
						Over 50"	Motorcycles	OHV's
221	Double Track	3.86	3.86	OSM-6	OSM-6	yearlong	11/1 - 5/1	11/1 - 5/1
221-A	Single Track	1.84	1.84	OSS-11	OSS-11	yearlong	11/1 - 5/1	yearlong
223	Single Track	4.24	4.24	OSS-11	OSS-11	yearlong	11/1 - 5/1	yearlong
<b>Total</b>		<b>9.94</b>	<b>9.94</b>					

The trail system within the project area consists of trails that are either in coincident use with an open road, have been created on an existing road template currently closed to full-sized vehicles, or exist as a “true” trail template with specifications such as width that would only be navigable by trail vehicles.

In addition to the trail system, there is a well-developed road system available, providing the opportunity for lengthy excursions. Well-traveled roads in the project area include:

- d. Meadow Creek Road , NFS Road 328
- e. Palouse Divide, NFS Road 377
- f. Blakes Ridge, NFS Road 3830-1
- g. Blakes Divide, NFS Road 3832
- h. Blakes Ridge A Road, NFS Road 3830-A

There are approximately 40 miles of National Forest System (NFS) roads within the project area, including 9 miles of storage roads. System roads within the project area include Level 3 (10.08 miles), Level 2 (20.8 miles), and Level 1 (9.09 miles). Generally, the frequency of road maintenance work decreases as the road level decreases, with travel conditions moving from travel generally suitable to passenger cars (Level 3), to roads generally suitable for high clearance

<sup>1</sup> Existing condition:

<sup>2</sup> Travel plan code: OSM-6: Open Seasonally Motorcycles (only motorcycles) 5/2-10/31; OSS-11: Open Seasonally Small (only motorcycle and ATV) 5/2-10/31.

vehicles (Level 2), and roads which are roads in a stored state and currently unavailable for vehicular use (Level 1).

Both trails and roads access a number of vistas and points of interest. NFS road 377 provides outstanding views in all directions. To access points of interest and vistas, users have multiple options available – motorized single track trail, double-track trail, or standard width NFS roads.

Illegal user-created trails also occur within the project area. The increase in illegal use has created natural resource damage in watershed locations and may continue to increase in the future. Approximately 50% of illegal trails in the project area are occurring in drainages and across stream channels.

**2. Camping:** There are several locations available for dispersed camping within the project area. Most weekends throughout the summer will find the majority of campsites occupied. Additionally, while technically outside of the project area, Forest Service operated Giant White Pine Campground and numerous additional dispersed sites provide camping opportunities utilized by recreation visitors to the project area.

- a. **Dispersed camping:** Dispersed campsites within the project area are not identified with posts, numbers or any other type of signage. Visitors are drawn to these dispersed sites from evidence of prior use –“hardened” locations that due to use, are generally devoid of vegetation. Sites are located throughout the project area on major National Forest System (NFS) roads including 377, 382, 3832, 3830-1, and their spur roads. Dispersed site inventory work has taken place in a portion of the project area and cataloged only four dispersed sites. All of the dispersed sites in the project area have no developed amenities (such as a toilet, picnic table, etc.), and visitors are expected to use ‘Leave-No-Trace’ practices when using these sites. Recreationists occupying the dispersed campsites are generally engaged in either off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation or hunting during the fall season and a mix of activities during the summer, including berry picking and hiking.

**3. Non-motorized recreation:**

**Hiking, bicycling and horse-riding:** While there are no designated non-motorized trails in the project area, the extensive Giant White Pine trail system adjacent to the project area does provide for hiking, bicycling and horse-riding opportunities. With the proximity of popular developed camping (Giant White Pine Campground), natural features of interest, plus accessible and maintained trails, non-motorized recreation is a moderately popular activity in the project area.

**4. Winter recreation:** Both motorized and non-motorized winter recreation opportunities are available in the project area. Use is relatively high due to the area providing approximately 13 miles of groomed and ungroomed ski trails and an additional 17 miles of non-motorized ski trails are adjacent to the project area. There are large numbers of skiers who enjoy groomed and ungroomed experiences, and for those users, this area provides ample opportunity.

**5. Other recreation:**

- a. **Firewood gathering and berry picking:** Opportunities such as firewood gathering and berry picking are both a large part of the recreation experience in the White Pine project area, providing cultural and practical benefits for area residents. With this

area providing some of the closest access to National Forest Land in the surrounding area, pressure and competition for both firewood and huckleberries is intense. Firewood is an important heat source for residents of the surrounding communities, and berry picking along National Forest System roads gives area recreationists access to the local huckleberry crop. Each of these activities has been occurring in the area for generations and is engaged in to strengthen family ties, and provide food and fuel for local residents.

- b. Hunting: During the fall, hunting is a very popular activity within the White Pine project area. Species hunted in this area include elk, deer, bear, cougar, turkey, grouse and wolf.

## Environmental Consequences

### *Methodology*

Analysis for the recreation resource included developing an understanding of current use types and use patterns in the project area. It is clear that visitors are engaging in a number of different activities such as off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, camping, non-motorized recreation (hiking, bicycling, horse riding), winter recreation and other recreation (berry picking, hunting, firewood gathering). To address the effects of each alternative, the following issue indicators were assessed :

1. **Off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation**: OHV recreation continues to be a growing segment of recreation use throughout the Palouse Ranger District. Within the White Pine project area, use is high on National Forest System roads and trails. To address the effects of the individual alternatives on OHV recreation, analysis focused on the following:
  - a. Degree of impact on trails to use due to location of vegetation management activities
  - b. Total number of road miles decommissioned, by alternative
  - c. Total number of road miles placed into storage, by alternative
  - d. Total number of system road miles constructed, by alternative
2. **Camping**: There are a number of opportunities for dispersed camping throughout the project area. To address the effects of the individual alternatives on camping, analysis focused on the following:
  - a. Total number of road miles decommissioned, by alternative
  - b. Total number of road miles placed into storage, by alternative
  - c. Total number of system road miles constructed, by alternative
3. **Non-motorized recreation**: Currently, non-motorized recreation activities such as hiking, bicycling and horse riding occur infrequently within the project area. To address the effects of the individual alternatives on non-motorized recreation, analysis focused on the following:
  - a. Degree of impact on trails due to location of vegetation management activities
  - b. Total number of road miles decommissioned, by alternative
  - c. Total number of road miles placed into storage, by alternative
  - d. Total number of system road miles constructed, by alternative



4. **Winter recreation:** Both motorized and non-motorized winter recreation is available and extremely popular within the project area. To address the effects of the individual alternatives on winter recreation, analysis focused on the following:
- a. Likelihood of winter logging/haul
  - b. Total acres of vegetation management activity, by alternative
5. **Other recreation:** There are a number of other important recreation activities that take place throughout the project area, including berry picking, firewood gathering and hunting.

To address the effects of the individual alternatives on *berry picking and hunting*, analysis focused on the following:

- a. Total acres of vegetation management activity, by alternative
- b. Total number of road miles decommissioned, by alternative
- c. Total number of road miles placed into storage, by alternative
- d. Total number of system road miles constructed, by alternative

To address the effects of the individual alternatives on *firewood gathering*, analysis focused on the following:

- a. Total acres of vegetation management activity, by alternative
- b. Total number of road miles decommissioned, by alternative
- c. Total number of road miles placed into storage, by alternative
- d. Total number of system road miles constructed, by alternative

## Spatial and Temporal Context for Effects Analysis

**Geographic Boundary:** The boundary evaluated for cumulative effects of recreation encompasses the White Pine project area as well as portions of sub watersheds of the Deep Creek – Palouse River Watershed. These sub watersheds include:

- a. Headwaters Palouse River (170601080101)
- b. Big Sand Creek – Palouse River (170601080102)

This boundary has been chosen for analysis of cumulative effects due to the presence of a number of other highly valued recreation sites – trails, campgrounds, dispersed campsites, etc. – are located just outside of the project area boundary, yet they all contribute to the high level of recreation use within and around the project area.

**Time frame:** The time frame for the evaluation of cumulative effects is 10 years following implementation of the project. This timeframe is used because after 10 years, the public's adjustment to access changes should be complete. Closed and decommissioned roads or trails would be adequately revegetated to provide natural barriers and mimic other roads or trails closed year long.

## Past, Present, and Foreseeable Activities Relevant to Cumulative Effects Analysis

The White Pine project area has been home to a variety of management activities throughout the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century and continuing to this day. Timber removal has been part of the landscape with active and engaged management by the district for many years. Harvest of different types (commercial thin, shelterwood, clearcut, etc.) has varied over time.

Roads are a large part of the landscape in this project area with 40 miles of NFS roads present. The road system was developed in the 1950s primarily to facilitate management of district timber resources.

Additional activities that have taken place in the past and have contributed to the management of the area includes grazing, mining, treatment of noxious weeds and recreational trail use. Furthermore, dispersed camping, berry picking, hunting and firewood gathering have all evolved in the area throughout time given availability and access.

It is expected that each of these activities would occur into the future, with some degree of natural ebbs and flows of use depending on a variety of factors, including the availability of various resources (big game, available timber, forage for grazing, etc.).

There are no planned large scale recreation developments in the foreseeable future. It is expected that Forest Service work in the area will only be annual and deferred maintenance of recreation sites, particularly existing trails within the project area. Regardless of the alternative that is chosen for this project, this maintenance work will still continue to occur.

### *Alternative 1 – No Action*

#### Direct Effects and Indirect Effects

1. **OHV recreation:** Under this alternative, the opportunities for OHV recreation would remain the same as exist currently, with OHVs restricted to existing National Forest System (NFS) roads and trails. Annual and deferred maintenance (as needed) of existing trails would continue to be completed as identified in each individual Trail Management Objective (TMO's).

Illegal user-created trails located in the project area may continue to develop new spurs and increase in mileage. This would require an increased Law Enforcement presence to mitigate this illegal activity. The increase in illegal use has created natural resource damage in drainages and across streams and may continue to increase under the this alternative.

2. **Camping (dispersed):** Under the No Action Alternative, the existing dispersed camping opportunities would remain for the public, therefore there would be no change in the availability of this activity.
3. **Non-motorized recreation:**  
Hiking, bicycling and horse-riding: Under the No Action Alternative, the existing hiking opportunities would remain for the public; therefore, there would be no change in the availability of this activity under this alternative.

4. **Winter recreation:** Opportunities for winter recreation would remain the same under the No Action Alternative. Road access would not be altered with this alternative, thereby providing the same amount of opportunities as currently exist.
5. **Other recreation:**
  - a. Berry picking and firewood gathering: Due to the unchanged nature of road access with the No Action Alternative, in the short-term, opportunities for berry picking and firewood gathering would remain the same. The No Action Alternative has the potential to reduce the amount of huckleberries available for users due to the likely increase in canopy cover and the resulting shading that would limit the expansion of existing berry patches in the long term. Firewood gathering would not be impacted in the short or long-term under this alternative.
  - b. Hunting: In the short-term, opportunities for hunting would remain the same with the with this alternative. Road access would not be altered with this alternative thereby providing the same degree of access as currently exists. However, in the mid-to-long-term, continued increase in canopy cover has the potential to decrease the availability of browse for game species and potentially inhibit population growth of some animals that are desirable for hunting.

## *Alternative 2 – Proposed Action*

### ***Proposed Action***

The Palouse Ranger District of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests is proposing the White Pine project. Kurt Steele, Forest Supervisor, is the Responsible Official. The proposed action was developed with input from members of the Shoshone-Benewah County Forest Health Collaborative, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and other contributing members of the public.

This proposed project includes a combination of commercial timber harvest, site preparation, and reforestation to restore species and structural diversity, reduce susceptibility to root disease in affected stands, and provide for social and economic benefits. Permanent road construction will be necessary to complete these activities and to ensure future management access. The following activities are being proposed:

- 1,981 acres of commercial harvest (1,705 acres regeneration harvest and 276 acres commercial thinning)
- 722 acres of non-commercial fuel treatments
- Regeneration harvest would create 11 openings greater than 40 acres in size and require approval from the Regional Forester prior to implementation.

The following would be conducted in support of the above actions:

- Fifteen miles of temporary roads will be constructed to facilitate vegetation treatments, and will be decommissioned after all project activities, including fuels treatments and reforestation are completed.
- Up to 4 miles of new permanent road will be constructed extending FS road 3832 to facilitate harvest of units T46-T50.

- Portions of FS3830-1 a motorized trail known as the Samson Trail will be utilized for harvest activities and returned to a motorized trail at the end of the project.
- Road maintenance activities will be performed along the haul route, and reconstruction activities to include culvert replacements, spot rock replacements, brushing, and reshaping drainage dips.

## Design Features and Mitigation Measures

Recreation Staff will work with those responsible for vegetation management activities (timber management, fuels, etc.) to ensure design features are followed for this project. This will include ensuring trail templates are returned to their original size and condition post-vegetation management and trail features (i.e., bridges, puncheon, waterbars, etc.) are restored to their previous condition if damaged. Recreation Staff will be consulted on timing of vegetation management activities with the goal of staggering harvest times so that trail closures will minimize impacts to users to provide the best potential for visitors to access valued recreation destinations throughout the life of project implementation.

## Direct Effects and Indirect Effects

### Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

1. **OHV recreation:** Under this alternative, with the proposed level of vegetation management activity, there would be a direct impact to OHV recreation within the project area. Impacts would be due to a wide variety of factors including the likelihood of:

- Trails crossing through vegetation management units would need to be closed for some degree of time.
- Trails within units may be used for haul of material.
- Recreationists may have difficulty accessing valued recreation destinations due to road closures and restrictions during harvest activity.

The degree of impact would vary by trail/road, with the highest level of impact occurring on the three main system trails in the project area, including trails 221, 221-A, and 223 (see Table 1.). With Alternative 2, the vast majority of these trail miles would be impacted by vegetation management activity within treatment units. It is likely that this would necessitate widespread and prolonged trail closures to facilitate removal of forest products.

The trail system within the project area consists of trails that are either in coincident use with an open road, have been created on an existing road template currently closed to full-sized vehicles, or exist as a “true” trail template with specifications such as width that would only be navigable by trail vehicles. Much of the “true” trail templates are expected to be used for or converted to temporary roads to facilitate management actions and or haul routes. These roads/trails would require closures during treatment activities.

Alternative 2 includes up to 4 miles of new road construction. It is not expected that this would result in any impact on OHV recreation in the project area since the temporary roads would be decommissioned post-treatment and recreational access on these temporary roads would likely be restricted during their lifetime. Approximately 6 miles of OHV trails are proposed be utilized for haul route and would be restored to its original template after

treatment is complete. The clearing width for this road is 30' which would remain unchanged when the trail tread is reconstructed. Physical barriers such as remaining slash and logs would be necessary along these sections of trails to reduce user-created networks.

**Table 2 – Impact to OHV recreation due to vegetation management activity**

Trail #	Degree of impact			Unit(s) potentially affecting trail
	Low	Moderate	High	
221			X	T-2 T-8, T-11, T-51, T-52
221-A			X	T-2, T-4, T-5
223			X	T-6, T-7, T-15, T-16, T-17, T-18, T-19

2. **Camping (dispersed):** It is anticipated under the Proposed Action alternative that impacts to dispersed camping within the project area would occur at varying degree. The greatest impact would be in short-to-mid-term with the expected dust and noise due to treatment activities. Other impacts would occur due to project road decommissioning and storage. However the roads identified under these categories are currently infrequently used for dispersed camping.
3. **Non-motorized recreation:** Hiking, bicycling and horse-riding: With all non-motorized activity taking place on the motorized trails in the project area, the impact of proposed management activities in this alternative are the same as described above under OHV recreation.
4. **Winter recreation:** The timing of material removal along NFS roads would determine the potential effects to winter recreation in the project area. Summer removal would not affect winter recreation. With the relatively high winter recreation use in this area, it is expected that the impact of winter hauling (if it is to occur) would be high due to the closure of nearly 50% of the ski trail system in the short term. It is possible that if winter haul were to occur it could potentially open up areas previously not accessible for additional winter recreation uses. A large amount of terrain would become available post treatment creating large openings that could draw additional winter enthusiasts to the area for recreational pursuits in the long term.
5. **Other recreation:**
  - a. Berry picking and firewood gathering: Proposed vegetation management of over 2,100 acres in this alternative would result in both positive and negative impacts to these activities. The proposed regeneration harvest and fuels activities have the potential to increase availability of huckleberry crops providing benefit to recreationists. Berry bushes have the propensity to thrive in newly opened landscapes and would likely do so in treated units throughout the project area. As noted in the OHV section of this alternative, there would be a small percentage of roads either decommissioned or placed in storage, but this would not appreciably hinder availability of huckleberry picking areas due to their very low use at this time.

Firewood gathering would be impacted in both the short and long term under this alternative. A large percentage of the project area would become unavailable for personal use firewood gathering. Project implementation would consist of multiple timber sales which would result in only a portion of the vegetation management work

taking place in any one year. This is anticipated to lessen the short term impacts to firewood gatherers. Nonetheless, with the White Pine Project site close in proximity and most accessible locations in the area for this activity, long term impacts may be felt throughout the surrounding communities after project completion. The decommissioning/storage of a small percentage of roads within the project area would result in some loss of opportunity; however impacts are anticipated to be minimal.

- b. Hunting: Alternative 2 may result in a short-term impact to hunting in the project area. This would be due to the increased level of activity from treatments, including the increased truck activity on area roads. All of which may impact the availability of game in the short term. However, in the mid-to-long-term the proposed management activities have the potential to benefit hunting opportunities through a potential increase in available forage and browse, thereby potentially increasing populations of some desirable species.

## Compliance with Forest Plan and Other Relevant Laws, Regulations, Policies and Plans

### Clearwater Forest Plan.

The current plan that the Clearwater National Forest is working under was published in 1987. The Clearwater National Forest Plan has a number of goals, objectives, and standards that apply directly to recreation, transportation, access and roads, and influences both the current and future landscape of the project area.

### Forest-wide management direction for Recreation – goals:

- a. Provide for a range of quality outdoor recreational opportunities within a Forest environment that will meet public needs now and in the future.
- b. Provide opportunity for a broad spectrum of dispersed activities with sufficient area to maintain a low user density compatible with public expectations.

### Forest-wide management direction for Recreation objectives:

- a. Provide a wide variety and range of dispersed recreational opportunities in a mix of approximately 60 percent roaded and 40 percent unroaded settings.
- b. Maintain developed camping facilities to meet anticipated demand...
- c. Meet 100 percent of the anticipated demand for dispersed recreation in unroaded land...
- d. Manage dispersed recreational areas to maintain use within capacity as defined by measureable limits of acceptable change for the designated setting...

### Forest-wide management direction for Recreation standards:

- a. Use the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and Recreation Opportunity Guide (ROG) as guides to provide a full array of recreation.
- b. Designate areas, roads, and tracts for off-road vehicle (ORV) use in accordance with management area goals and standards...

- c. Include analysis of the trails to determine whether to abandon or retain; and if retain, whether to relocate temporarily or permanently when conducting environmental analysis in areas that contain system trails.
- d. Regulate use of roads, trails, and specified areas along with designating areas for ORV (Off-road Vehicle) use as per Executive Order 11644, through the Clearwater National Forest Travel Planning Direction...and in conformance with the ROS designations for specific areas.

There are two area prescriptions that apply to the project area and outline the type of recreation opportunities that may be available in certain geographical locations. However, the vast majority of the project area is located within the E1 management prescription.

E1 Prescription (Timber producing lands): 2,100 acres within the project area are encompassed in this prescription.

Goal: Timber producing land managed for healthy timber stands to optimize potential timber growing. Timber production is cost effective and provides maximum protection of soil and water quality. Manages big game, primarily elk, through limited road closures. Provides dispersed recreation and livestock grazing if compatible with timber management goals (Clearwater Forest Plan, page. III-57).

Specifically for recreation, applicable goals and standards include:

- a. Manage a roaded natural setting for dispersed recreation.
- b. Manage areas seen from Management Areas A4, A5, and A6 to meet the adopted VQOs shown in Appendix G.

Specifically for facilities management, applicable goals and standards include:

Goals:

- a. Manage for all levels of difficulty of ORV use on trails.
- b. Regulate use of roads and trails (to motorized vehicles) where needed to accomplish wildlife, watershed objectives, or property values. Manage seasonal and year-long road closures to provide security for elk to meet area objectives.

Standards: Design and develop road systems in accordance with area transportation plan procedures.

M2 Prescription (Riparian Areas): Inclusions.

Goal: Manage under the principles of multiple use as areas of special consideration, distinctive values, and integrated with adjacent management areas to the extent that water and other riparian dependent resources are protected (Clearwater Forest Plan, page. III-69).

Specifically for recreation, applicable goals and standards include:

Goal: Manage settings for dispersed recreation commensurate with the settings of the surrounding or adjacent management areas(s).

Standards:

- a. Locate and establish recreational facilities on dry, well-drained areas, preferably on the periphery of the area.
- b. Manage areas seen from Management Areas A4, A5, and A6 to meet or exceed the adopted visual quality objectives shown in Appendix G.

## Monitoring Recommendations

Follow up monitoring should take place to ensure trails impacted by harvest activities are reconstructed to OHV trail standards and user created trail decommissioning is effective.

*s/s Shawn Dieterich*

Shawn Dieterich

Recreation Management Specialist